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Committees to Examine Mental Health System

Senate Health Policy and DCH Appropriations Subcommittee Gather Input

September 10, 2003-Yesterday, the Senate Health Policy Committee and Department of Community Health Appropriations Subcommittee scheduled the first two of several hearings to examine the status of Michigan's mental health delivery system. Dates and times for the first two hearings were set at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 17, 2003, and 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 24, 2003 in the Senate Hearing Room, 1st floor, Boji Tower.

The committees are meeting in response to a charge from Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema to suggest ways to improve care and accountability in the mental health community. The majority leader issued a press release in early August detailing his concerns about growing accounts of shortcomings in services to the mentally ill.

"The appropriations subcommittee looks forward to joining Senator Hammerstrom's policy committee in this important endeavor," said Sen. Tony Stamas (R-Midland), the Senate DCH Appropriations Subcommittee chair. "We must ensure that the largest percentage of dollars appropriated for mental health services reach those who need it."

The hearing on Wednesday, September 17th, 2003 will begin with several planned presentations to provide committee members with background information followed by a segment for public comment. The following week's meeting will be devoted primarily to public comment.

"We are always most interested in hearing from individuals and families who are now or have in the past encountered the need for mental health treatment and their experiences," said Sen. Bev Hammerstrom (R-Temperance), chair of the Senate Health Policy Committee. "I encourage anyone who is willing to share their suggestions for how we can improve our system to come and share their ideas."